



MUSICAL INVOLVEMENT, PREFERENCES AND APPRECIATION OF CAREER IN MUSIC AMONG YOUTH IN SIKKIM

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ABSTRACT

Music has always been a matter of passion and life. But, studying it was never an upper-choice among the mass in the society. Sikkim is one of the culturally rich states of India. This is in the north-eastern regions of the country. Some universities in the state have recently introduced music programs. The present study is an attempt to examine the musical preferences of the students and study their aspirations towards music education.

KEYWORDS: Musical preference, career in music, Youths' involvement, Sikkim.

INTRODUCTION:

The tradition, culture and music of north-east India is unique. Sikkim, located on the lap of the Himalayas, live with music. There is music in every event of life and tradition in Sikkim. Not only in the traditions and rituals, music exists in almost every aspect of life, even in the day today life. Irrespective of economic status, it is very common for the people here to have a guitar at home. The youth of the society is warmly inclined towards music. One can listen to wide range of music while travelling in taxis, or during visits at shops, restaurants and other places. Bob Marley, Britney Spears, Rolling Stones, Beatles to the Bollywood is prominently present in Sikkim's sound scape. One will also not miss the local traditional tracks and, at times some ghazals. Music is fundamental to adolescent identity in Sikkim. This is because; their music provides the idea conduit for identity negotiation, construction, consolidation management and verification. The continual interplay between music, identity construction and cognition behavior are fundamental aspects in adolescent daily living. This helps to address and understand the emotional, personal and developmental crises that often arise in this emotionally turbulent period of maturation and growth. (Marsden, 2013) Thus the diversity in the musical preferences in such a small place engenders curiosity of knowing the actual picture of the musical preferences and choices.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY:

Despite this musical multiplicity and passion among the youth, there are very few people who are professionally involved in music. Number of enrollments for Music Programs in universities is relatively low compared to most of the other available programs. This is indeed a matter of concern in this part of the country. There is serious lack of the conservatories, institutions of music in the state. Critical causes appear to influence youth's career aspiration in music such as the conflict between professional music and academic career in music. This is although a common phenomenon in almost every part of the country. There always existed the conflict between the oral tradition and the modern methods of class room teaching. The very unconventional nature of the subject carries the fallacy of financial uncertainty. In Sikkim the learning and teaching music mostly limited to a few conservatories. These conservatories offer only western music classes. Also, there is less scope for other leading forms of music of India which the students can aspire for. The career in music is still a question, a dilemma in the minds of local youth community. Here are some factors those might be responsible for this dilemma.

- Musical ability of a person is conceptualized to be natural and nurtured by the individual or an impact of a person's own family's musical heredity. The perception of 'specially gifted in music' and the hereditary connections with music are generally understood as determining factors for the aspiration of a kid in music. Persons without musical family background or possessing inadequate society-recognized musical talent usually do not imagine their own growth as a good musician.
- Generally, music is expected to be spontaneous. It is used to manage and regulate moods and emotions, to chill and relax and to reminisce (Georgi et al 2006; Juslin & Laukka 2004; Saarikallio & Erkkilä 2007; Schramm & Wirth 2006; Waterman 1996; Zillmann 1988). Systematic learning and practicing methods are also kind of unnerving. The level of practice and efforts needed to achieve the artistic and virtuosity levels of a professional musician or music as an academic career generate dubiety in the minds of the youth.
- Besides these, some studies revealed the problem of; (a) parents' low interest towards music in the school going students, (b) problems of institutional set-

tings in contradiction to the study of other subjects, (c) association of musical preferences with the social and geographical locations etc.

In the present study, the targeted population is the students of Sikkim University those have opted subject other than music as their career option. These students are taken with the hypothesis that despite their involvement in non-musical career, these respondents have passion for music and they do appreciate career in music. In this study, we did not include students with music-major, as these students have already chosen music as their career option.

METHODOLOGY:

Research Questions:

The research was carried out to find out the answers of the following questions from the students those have not opted music in their subject-group.

- Identifying the Music preference of the youth
- Analyzing the involvement of youth in music learning, performances and music making process.
- To find out impression of these students about career in music.

Participants:

The participants of the study were the students of Sikkim University enrolled in subjects other than music. 200 questionnaire-sheets were distributed among the students from various departments. The students were from the departments of Chemistry, English, Physics, and Psychology, etc. From 200 distributed forms 184 (92%) forms were filled up and returned back. Since most of the students were from the Undergraduate and Postgraduate programs, the students' age range was from 19 to 28. The age group was ideal to represent the youth of the society. The demography of 184 students varied in terms of gender, subject and state they belong to. In which, 126 (68.4%) were female and 58 (31.5%) were male. The questionnaires included probing, direct and indirect questions.

Data Collection:

In order to answer the research questions a structured questionnaire was developed matching the hypothetical framework. 250 questionnaires were distributed among various departments of the University.

FINDINGS:

Music Preference:

To find out the music preference six options i.e. Indian Classical Music, Local Popular Music, Bollywood, Folk Music, Western Music and Ghazal were given in the questionnaire. The options represented the music styles that have the degree of familiarity.

Among 184 respondents 178 (96.7%) marked 'Of Course', which indicate their higher degree of love for music. Only 5 (2.7%) respondents marked 'Not Much' and only 1 (0.5%) respondent marked 'No' in reply. In response to the preference of musical forms among the six given choices, preference for western music noted as the highest and recorded 70.0%. This was followed by Bollywood music of 67.3%, Local Pop (55.4%) folk music (46.1%) and Indian Classical Music (36.4%). The least preferred was Ghazal i.e. 28.2%. The obtained result is shown in figure 1.

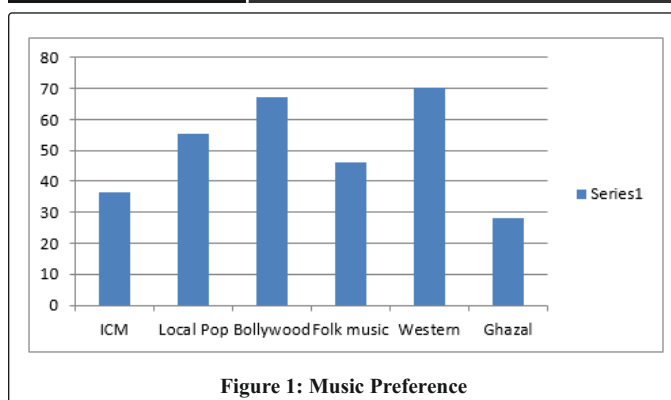


Figure 1: Music Preference

Involvement in Music learning, performance and music making:

Three questions were given to obtain data relating involvement in music learning, performance and music making. The questions were; (a) Have you learnt music? (b) Do you have any musical instrument of your own? (c) Have you written/ composed/ created any song/music? Interestingly majority of the students found to be involved with music in one or the other way. Be it pedagogy in music, possession of musical instrument, writing or/and composing music (Figure 2).

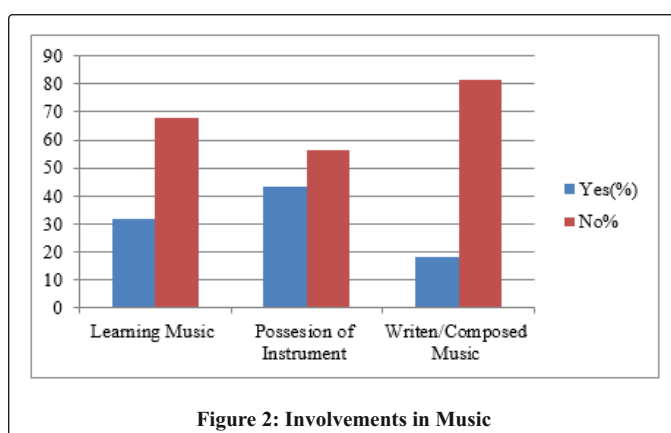


Figure 2: Involvements in Music

Appreciation for Career in Music:

Two relevant questions were asked to find out about the appreciation of career in music. The questions were; (a) Do you like music as your career? (b) Do you think everyone should have some musical training? In response to this majority (95%) of the students answered that not only the gifted people in fact everyone should have some musical training (Figure 3). Majority of the respondents (87.5%) appreciated career in music, only (8.3%) responded 'not sure' to the question.

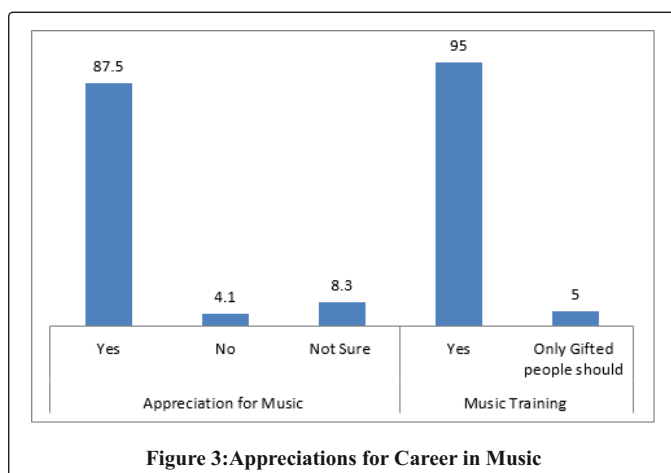


Figure 3: Appreciations for Career in Music

SUMMARY:

The aim of the study was to investigate the preference pattern of music among the youths of Sikkim and their appreciation of music as career. Six major musical forms those are popular in India were given as options for the youth to choose from. This is to identify the relative roles of different types of music that, as James Lull stated, assert youths' personalities, develop peer relationships and romantic entanglements. (Lull.J 1987). The Western Music is most preferred here and this is followed by Bollywood music. The result of western music, Bollywood and others may not surprise in general. The level of preference for

Indian Classical Music (36.4%) was found as much higher than generally expected. Sikkim has no known background of Indian Classical Music.

Looking at the results of the components like youths' involvement in music, possession of musical instrument, training in music and appreciation to the career in music this is evident that music has a great importance in the life of the youth. This study suggested that music is occupying important space in the lives of the young people of Sikkim. They are quite passionate about music and also understand that music can offer a career. But, there is considerable hesitancy in opting music as a career choice.

These findings have given an insight that the musical career option is a major problem, as they have to maintain a strong balance between various other aspects of living. This restricts their freedom and musical satisfaction. There is a clear dichotomy between the musical preferences of the young population of Sikkim and the main stream music of India.

Scope of further research:

The current study indicates towards the need of detailed analyses of the problem of career choice in the youth of Sikkim. Such a study should be executed from data collected in natural settings. Such a study is expected to develop a sustainable theory.

This study was an attempt to explore the aspirations and some music related status of the youths of Sikkim those are studying at the university level. This research can be extended to the basic levels of the schools and colleges. This can explore further aspects of the musical preferences and career possibilities. Such a study will help to present clearer picture on the students' future career aspirations. Understanding of youths' (School, College and University students) choices, aspirations, problems and findings of the studies can substantially contribute in the area of the study of music. Such researches are expected to assist the policy makers and the educational institutes in developing a clearer vision that will ultimately help to effectively plan the programs and course patterns.

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